

The Bloody Issue Healed :

BEING THE
SUBSTANCE
OF A
SERMON

PREACHED AT THE
TABERNACLE, LONDON,
ON THURSDAY EVENING,
October 10, 1743.

By JOHN CENNICK,
Late of READING in BERKSHIRE.

“ Daughter, be of good comfort ; thy faith hath
made thee whole ; go in peace,” Luke viii. 48.

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PREFACE TO THE READER.

“ I Have read over the following sermon, and
“ I think it plain and scriptural, and sweetly
“ adapted to the capacities of the poor, for whose
“ benefit it was preached, and is now published.
“ Surely the Spirit of the Lord is upon the author,
“ and the Lord has indeed anointed him to preach
“ the gospel to the poor. I cannot therefore but
“ own and honour him, though not sent forth by
“ external imposition of hands: and I trust all
“ our young preachers will be enabled to publish
“ some of their discourses, for a testimony to the
“ present, and benefit of future ages. They will
“ judge more impartially, and greedily embrace
“ what many of the present generation will reject.

I am,

Courteous Reader,

Thy soul's friend and well-wisher,

Brinkwerth, Dec.

19, 1743.

G. WHITEFIELD.”



The Bloody Issue Healed.

MARK V. 34.

“ Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole ; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague.

IN the preceding verses the evangelist gives an account of a certain woman, who having been solely diseased of a bloody issue, and getting no cure elsewhere ; at length, hearing of Jesus, came and was healed by him. To whom, after she was healed, the Lord spake these words : “ Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole.” &c. Of these words, and of the manner of her cure, I purpose to speak in particular.

The scripture saith, “ A certain woman (perhaps intimating thereby that she was noted in that country) being diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him.” She was a remarkable woman because of her disease ; and the more so, because she had been twelve years in that case, and could get no cure. Doubtless she was almost, or quite out of hope, of ever being helped ; for she might consider, how diseases of a few days contraction were easily cured, but old

ones are scarce ever removed ; they generally accompany people to their graves : I say, she might justly so think, and especially when she had (as we are told) spent all her living upon physicians, and was nothing the better, but rather the worse. Her days were miserable through her malady, and she could have no comfort, because she was without hope of obtaining a cure. She had (I suppose) went to all the physicians who were famous for doing cures, and (it is said) she had given them all her substance : It may be, she had even parted with her good apparel, and had nothing but rags to cover her naked and diseased body ; and we may reasonably imagine, that through the continual running of her issue, those rags she might have, were so very offensive and loathsome, that no one could look on her but as an object of the greatest pity. If friends had given her clean raiment, it would soon have become unclean and nasty ; for her issue kept running, and polluted every thing she put on : But we do not hear she had any friends, nor clean apparel, nor money, nor any thing left ; but was a poor, diseased, unhappy woman ; the very emblem of a sinner, whose eyes the Lord hath opened to see his fearful estate ; and her filthy rags were the perfect picture of self-righteousness. In this sad condition she heard of Jesus : Where it may be observed, that few rich people ever came to Jesus to be healed, or enquired after him ; the reason was, they had money enough to pay physicians, and so they thought they could do without him : Too many think so, I fear, among us. When the Woman herself had a living, a good estate, &c. she (we do not hear) looked after our Saviour no more than others ; but when her all was spent, and she had

had heard how Jesus had healed people freely, and how he loved the poor, and turned none away, she was encouraged to go to him, and try what he could do for her: So she came. The Lord often makes affliction and poverty the means of bringing us to himself. He oftentimes strips us of all the idols we have loved, and then we are forced to look to him; so he dealt with the poor woman: He let her go on in her own way a good while, even until she had no more to give to physicians, but was reduced to want and penury, and then the fame of Jesus sounded sweet in her ears. Had any one told her of the Lamb of God while she had money and goods, &c. perhaps she would have answered, It is well that there is so great a friend to the poor who want, but as for me, I have enough to pay my physicians with; I can do without him. It is very likely she had heard of Jesus and his miracles before; but she heard, as many hear now a days; they sit under sermons, and hear precept upon precept, and line upon line, but are never the better: They hear one say what God has done for him; and another tells in his hearing, how his sins are pardoned, and how he found the Son of righteousness arise upon him with healing in his wings; but all is like water spilt upon sand: The carnal only despise the news, and think the witnesses are mad, or in delusion; or if they can believe or think it true, it may be, their answer is a saint, I wish I could say so too; or, it may be, I thank God I have no need of seeking after Jesus as you: I have lived a sober life, and do all the good I can, and am not like other wicked men: I am not in much care about my future state: If I shall not go to heaven, who will? Alas! these do not know their disease

disease, and so do not want a cure : These are they of whom Jesus spake, saying, " I am not come to call the righteous, for they are whole, and think they need not a physician ; but I am come to call sinners to repentance, and to heal the broken-hearted."

When the woman came to Christ, she was in the utmost necessity ; she had been ailing twelve long years, and so longed for one that could heal her disease ; so that I dare say, when she heard of Jesus, her heart leaped for joy : Though when she came, she did not run up to him, as if he was bound to heal her ; no, she went behind him, ashamed of her bloody stinking rags, and was afraid so much as to ask him for mercy ; but yet followed, believing if she could but touch the border of his garment she should be made whole ; and as the multitude thronged him, she caught him by the hem of his garment ; and as soon as she touched him she felt in herself she was healed. Harken, my dear brethren, and come (as many as want to be healed) and touch the Lord Jesus too. How did she rejoice when the issue of her blood stanch'd ! How did her heart flow with thankfulness, and praises, and blessings, when she perceived whom she had touched ! She knew he was more than mere man ; surely she knew he was the Messiah that should come into the world. But scarce had she received so great mercy, but the Lord Jesus turned him about in the press, and asked, " Who touched me ?" The enemy then stepped in, and hurried the poor soul, and tempted her, persuading her she had no right to touch Jesus, and might now justly look for damnation, because she had presumptuously touched the border of so holy a garment with unhallowed hands, and stolen a cure, thinking she could do it without his knowledge. What horror seized her at this time !

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She did not know what to do! And where could she fly from him who was every where? So the woman fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth. She told him how she had been a long time in that bad way, and how she believed if she could but touch his garment she should be cured, and so had ventured, and found herself made whole of her issue of blood. But see and admire the love of Jesus! So soon as she had ended her confession, to ease her of her fears, and to shew her how he is not angry at people's coming to him, he said to her, "Daughter, be of good comfort, thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace." O that the same Saviour may say so to every poor sinner here to-day: Many followed the Lord Jesus as well as the woman; for the apostle saith, "the multitude thronged Jesus;" but we hear of no other that there found any virtue from him, save the woman: She touched him in faith, and was made whole; he therefore saith, "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace." But of this I purpose to speak more particularly hereafter. Let us apply what has been said already.

Many that are here may have read this account over and over, and yet have seen nothing in it but a relation of a strange miracle wrought by our Saviour on a poor wretched woman. Others, I suppose, have thought while I have been speaking, O I am convinced I am diseased like the woman, I have an issue of blood, an issue of sin in my heart, and have had it more than twelve years; I have had it ever since I came into the world. I wish I could be directed what to do to be saved. O my brethren, my dear brethren, I wish all of you knew what need you are in of the Lord Jesus Christ.

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There is not one of you but have this issue by nature. Ezekiel, when he describes the state of man, as he is brought forth into the world, saith, "The Lord looked on him in his blood (meaning his sin) all polluted and unclean," Ezek. xvi. So the Lord looks upon you now, and though many of you are quite insensible of your lost estate and misery, yet he sees your sin, pities you, and sends me to tell you to-day, where is one who will make you whole. Harken therefore every one of you: When you came into the world you were born in sin, corrupt and abominable, and the issue or fountain of sin was opened in your heart, and began running when you began breathing. Many, I believe, can say with myself, We are witnesses, by sad experience, that these things are so. Many here, I doubt not, have found sin like a bloody issue, and have day after day, and year after year strove to stop it, and could not; and when you had spent all your strength and power in going to physicians, were still no better, but rather worse; it can be said of you, that you have tried all means, and spent all your living. You have gone to friends and told them your trouble, and they sent you to take pleasure, to sing songs, to play at cards, to drink, to ride out, and keep company, &c. and many have seemed to get ease this way. Such sort of physicians have been commended by many; but, O! they only skin over the wound for a season; by and by the place will break out again, and the last state will be worse than the first. I believe many are in hell now that found such help in such miserable comforters and bad physicians, and are now lamenting how they fooled away their own souls: but do not I hear some say, I have tried pleasure, and pastime, and company, but, O! I am never the better,

better, I have looked to Moses, and strove to do all he bid me; I have fasted and prayed night and day; I have gone to church, given to the poor, read much, and wept and sorrowed, but yet I am overcome by sin; it still runs upon all my duties, and defiles them; it stains all my righteousness; it mingles in all my best works; pollutes my most holy services; and instead of getting the victory over it, I grow worse and worse. I strive, and resolve, and make vows, and break all. Books and sermons, and scripture afford me no comfort. I fear my wound is incurable; my pain is perpetual; I have no rest day nor night; and my moisture is like the drought in summer. If I seem to be a little sweet, and sin does not rule for a season, it is only like a torrent stemmed up, which anon breaketh down with greater violence, and carries all before it. I am ready to say there is no help for me in my God; and I have no rest because of my sin. Who art thou that so criest? Is there no Balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Jesus came to bring salvation to a distressed people. Draw nigh to mount Golgotha, and take a view of the Lord Jesus dying there for thee. There he pays the price of thy soul, and sheds down that rich blood, that has healed all the spirits of just men made perfect in heaven, and may heal thee. But methinks I hear thee answer, O I am the worst of sinners, I am the very chiefest of all: I am particularly sinful and diseased. So was the poor woman I have been speaking of, she was very bad, but not too bad to be healed. But thou sayest, if any could but see my sin, and my rebellious heart, they would be of my mind, and say there is no mercy. Thou judgest right, for with men it is impossible to save, or cure a sinner that finds he has no whole part in

him, but is full of wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores; but the thoughts of God are higher than our "thoughts, and his ways above our ways," and nothing is impossible with him: Is any thing too hard for the Lord? But yet again methinks I hear thee say, I am old in sin; I fear I am now hardened, and given over to a reprobate mind. If I had went to Jesus when I was young, or a good while ago had I applied to him, then I might have found mercy, but then I was one of them that went to other physicians, and thought I could get to heaven by my own righteousness, and turn and save myself when I would; besides, I remember some time ago, I had convictions of sin, and was drawn by the Father, but I went on, sinned against light, and now I fear I have committed the sin against the Holy Ghost; and what confirms me in my thoughts of being out of the reach of mercy is, because my sin has been of so long duration; I have had the stinking, filthy, and loathsome issue more than twelve years. My dear fellow sinner, what I have been speaking as the language of thy heart, was a few years ago the language of my own, and I did think I was consigned over to everlasting perdition. I could have as much hope and more for Judas, Esau, Francis Spira, &c. than for myself; I sought to other physicians indeed, viz. delights, plays, &c. to divert my grief; I then attempted by long fasts, and abstinence, and prayers, and tears, and alms, and going twice a day to church, and praying all day long in private, to stanch my issue of sin; but, alas! I strove in vain. I was more and more led captive by the devil, and more and more convinced that without Christ I could do nothing. Yet I believed like the woman, that if I could touch the hem of the Lord's garment

ment by faith, I should be made whole; and having been enabled to do so, I bear witness he is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, and will heal poor sinners of whatever disease they have, when they fly to him for pardon. I know you believe he is able to heal you: Methinks I hear you say, O that I could but touch the Lord's garment (his righteousness is his garment) I should be made whole, but I doubt his will: If I did but know he loved me, I would give ten thousand worlds. Sayest thou so? O come then to Jesus, and though thou hast despised him, and rejected his kind offers and calls, and hast let him pass by thee, yet follow on, and thou mayest yet know the Lord. The diseased poor woman did not meet, did not cry to Jesus when he passed by, but came behind and followed him, and she did not follow in vain. Here, O poor sinner, thou mayest learn, that if thou hast let our Saviour call thee, and court thee in vain before now, and suffer him to pass by, and refused to go with him, yet thou mayest go after him, and have him turn back, and give thee a gracious answer to all thy prayers. So did the spouse in the Canticles, when she had long refused her Beloved entrance into her chamber, and by vain excuses caused him to withdraw, she rose and sought him by night, and found him. Up then, thou that hast (like me) often refused our Saviour room in thy heart, go behind him weeping, and follow on, shewing thy wretched estate, and he will soon convince thee he changeth not, but is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever; you will find him turn to your complainings, and ready to answer to your earnest prayers. I dare say, when she followed Jesus, and saw what a multitude surrounded him, and how hard it was to get at him, she reasoned within herself, and might say, I may as well go back

as forward, for lo! there is no way to him for me! But still she went on, and as she could, got in among the crowd; and then, according to her faith, was she healed by touching the hem of the Redeemer's garment. Your thoughts, ye publicans, ye sinners, may be like hers, you may think whenever I go to pray, I have such a company of evil thoughts, and such a multitude of temptations between me and Jesus, that I am often tempted to strive no more. O my brother, my sister, whosoever thou art, be not discouraged: follow after Jesus, and say, If I perish, I will perish at the King's feet. But perhaps thou seest that thy bloody issue of sin hath made all thy best deeds but an abomination, and that thy very appearance is an evil favour in the nostrils of the most pure God; and so, because thou art so bad, and unworthy, thou canst not venture to come. Dear heart! this, no doubt was the case of this poor woman; she thought her issue was so filthy and unclean, that it would offend the nostrils of the Son of God, therefore came behind him. But she did venture at last; she came, she touched, and was made whole. Let this encourage thee then to come behind Jesus, and to believe that his righteousness may be touched by unworthy thee. None but the ungodly are justified by it, none but the lost, perishing souls lay hold on it; who knows, this day the righteousness of Jesus may be revealed in thine heart, and all thy sins washed away by a crucified Saviour's blood?

My brethren, if any of you could now believe in the Lord, and by faith draw nigh, and touch the hem of his garment, you shall be healed, and have the comfort of knowing it also. Some indeed teach that we may be forgiven, and yet not know

know it; and healed, and yet we not be sensible of it; but such doctrine is dangerous, and tends to make men easy where they are, and cry peace, peace to themselves, when there is no peace. Do not you so learn Christ. Let none here rest till they know they have closed with Jesus, till you can say, with full assurance of faith, that you have touched him; and till Jesus bears witness in your hearts, that virtue is gone out of his wounds to heal you. This woman felt in her body that she was healed of her plague. So you may know and feel in yourselves, even while you are in these bodies, that your souls are healed of the plague of sin. So soon as she touched our Saviour, her issue's bleeding stanch'd. So likewise when you believe in Jesus you shall find the power of sin cease and dry up. Sin shall not reign any more in your mortal bodies. You shall be more than conquerors through him that loved you, and reign over sin, and the world, and the devil with him, and be as kings in the earth. You shall then, from experience, believe Jesus to be God blessed for evermore, and become his blessed and happy witnesses world without end.

But, it may be, you can say, I believe I was born of God at such a time; I then could call Jesus Christ my Saviour, and was sure my sins were forgiven, but now I doubt, and am afraid: Come then fearing and trembling to Jesus, and fall down at his dear feet, and shew him all that is done. Tell him you are troubled, lest you have presumptuously touched him without preparation, and I know his answer will be, Son, be of good cheer, daughter, be of good comfort, thy faith hath saved thee; thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace.

Too many think they must do a good deal before they can be cured; they think they must live
good

good lives, and be very strict in their duty, &c. ere they can know their sins are forgiven; but such err, not knowing the scripture, neither the power of God. Jesus receiveth sinners. He justifieth the ungodly by imputing his righteousness to them; and whosoever believeth in him, (bond or free, male or female, Jew or Greek) shall receive remission of their sins. Jesus Christ wants no other preparation to come to him, but that we be convinced that we are poor, needy, lost, perishing sinners without him. The woman in the text had nothing to recommend her to the Lord's pity; but her wretchedness and sin, and yet is she (I do not doubt) at this time a witness of his free grace in the kingdom of heaven. She, when she came, had no good works to plead, that merited compassion or favour; but she came quite stripped, ashamed, and very miserable; and what did she meet with? Why, with free rich grace, revealed through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ: "Thy faith hath saved thee," saith our Saviour; not thy works, not thy own good deeds. No, but thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace. O come hither, and hearken, ye foolish, and learn wisdom. It is by faith only in Jesus Christ poor sinners get to the redemption which is in him, even the forgiveness of all their sins. By faith alone are the unrighteous brought to God, and by faith only made whole. If any ask how? I answer, faith is like a plaister spread with the blood of Christ, which heals every disease. Faith in good works, laid to a wounded sinner's conscience, only puts him to more pain. It is like an improper medicine laid to a sore, the patient is at no rest till it is taken away. Many sinners despair, and are unhappy, and distracted, and miserable, because they believe on others beside Jesus.

Jesus. Cruel physicians tell them, you must not think to be saved merely by believing in Christ; you must live a good life, and keep the commandments before you can be healed; and deluded souls believe it true; and so while they are looking after righteousness and salvation by the works of the law, they are always in bondage, and are not healed. O that God may give you to make Jesus Christ the object of your faith, and believe none other can do you good, believe no good work can be done, neither will you be any thing the better, but worse and worse, till you can trust your souls in the Lord Jesus Christ's arms, and fly for refuge, redemption, and deliverance only in his precious blood. Whoever believes in his pierced body, nailed to the cross for sin, and bruised for his iniquity, and can look to his blood and name as to the Fountain opened for his sin and for his uncleanness, shall by his stripes be healed. Many have a dead faith in Jesus that profits not, but few have that faith which saveth the soul: I mean a living faith, dipped in the blood of Jesus: A faith apprehending Christ, and laying hold on the hem of his garment. O my brethren, strive for this faith which was once delivered to the saints: rest not, but follow after Jesus, and cease not to cry, Lord help my unbelief, till you can say with joy (the Holy Ghost bearing you witness in your conscience) I believe; "Yea, the life I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." Sit not down till you have found virtue come out of Jesus to heal you: I mean merit from his pierced body to make you whole of your plague. When you are made clean, and healed by faith in the blood of Christ, you need not desire to be taught of man if you are right or not;

not ; the anointing that you have received will teach you, and the Spirit will be your witness that you are made whole. You will find the power and dominion of sin stanch'd, and you will shew to the world then that you have been with Jesus ; by the virtue you have received, you will walk as Christ also walked in the midst of this sinful and perverse generation, among whom, by your good works, you will shine as lights in the world. Yourselves being assured also of your part in Christ, shall pass sweetly the residue of your days in holiness and righteousness without fear ; and wait happy at the feet of the Lamb, till he shall send for you to the joyful number upon the mount Sion ; where you shall tune your song to the harpers harps, and to the praise of the free grace and mercy of our dear Saviour, you shall sing of his salvation for ever and ever. Amen.

F I N I S.

